

The Extremist Next Door



By **Chip Rowe**, Editor | May 17, 2019



Dunstan is shown in a video he posted to YouTube: "Ellis Island was a big mistake."

First Pittsburgh, then Christchurch and Poway — where does the hate come from?

By Chip Rowe

When the four pseudonymous hosts of a popular white supremacist podcast produced in southern Dutchess County were “doxxed” — or publicly identified — in January 2017, three immediately left the show.

The fourth seemed to shrug and carry on. He began using his real name on the show and made no effort to scrub his identity or address from the internet. This astonished a contributor to *It's Going Down*, an anti-fascist site, who wrote: “We could be dealing with someone preparing to live as an open Nazi in Fishkill, New York.”

Two years later, Jesse Dunstan, 40, remains a co-host of *TDS* (a consumer-friendly rebranding of its original name, *The Daily Shoah*, which mocks the Holocaust), on which he spews hatred for Jews, blacks, Muslims and gays. The show — one of 18 hosted on a website run by Dunstan called *The Right Stuff* (TRS) — has more than 400 episodes.





Jesse Dunstan is shown in a video he posted to YouTube: “Ellis Island was a big mistake.”

The Southern Poverty Law Center (<https://www.splcenter.org/>) (SPLC), which tracks extremists, calls TRS “one of the white supremacist movement’s most popular and effective (audio) propaganda hubs.” It says there are 34 loosely organized chapters of TRS listeners — their gatherings are called “pool parties” — up from four just two years ago. An offshoot of TRS called Identity Dixie and described by the SPLC as “neo-Confederate” has seven chapters. Recruitment fliers promoting TRS have been posted at the University at Albany, Purdue, Kent State and other universities, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

“People need to understand that *TDS* is more than a podcast,” says Michael Edison Hayden, a senior investigative reporter for the SPLC who earlier this month posted a video clip from a 2017 book-burning conducted behind Dunstan’s home (<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/05/01/prolific-alt-right-propagandists-identity-confirmed>). “They are attempting to build an on-the-ground white supremacist movement.”

That Dunstan lives in the Hudson Valley is not widely known, which may be how he navigates dual identities, hating openly but not openly hated. He resides with his wife and two children in a modest home that he has owned since 2007, pays his taxes and has played guitar in local bands. From family photos once posted on social media, he appears to be a regular guy. And he used to be, years ago, when he was growing up in Garrison.

Spreading hate

Dunstan launched *TDS* in 2014 with Mike Peinovich, a prominent white supremacist who may also live in Fishkill, based on social-media clues and videos posted at TRS. To conceal their identities, Peinovich used the name Mike Enoch, Dunstan became Seventh Son or Sven, and the other two hosts went by Ghoul and Bulbasaur. The podcast made a name for itself with the popularization of “echoes,” which began as a reverb the hosts used whenever saying the name of a Jew and morphed into triple parentheses placed around names on social media to indicate Jews or Jewish influence.



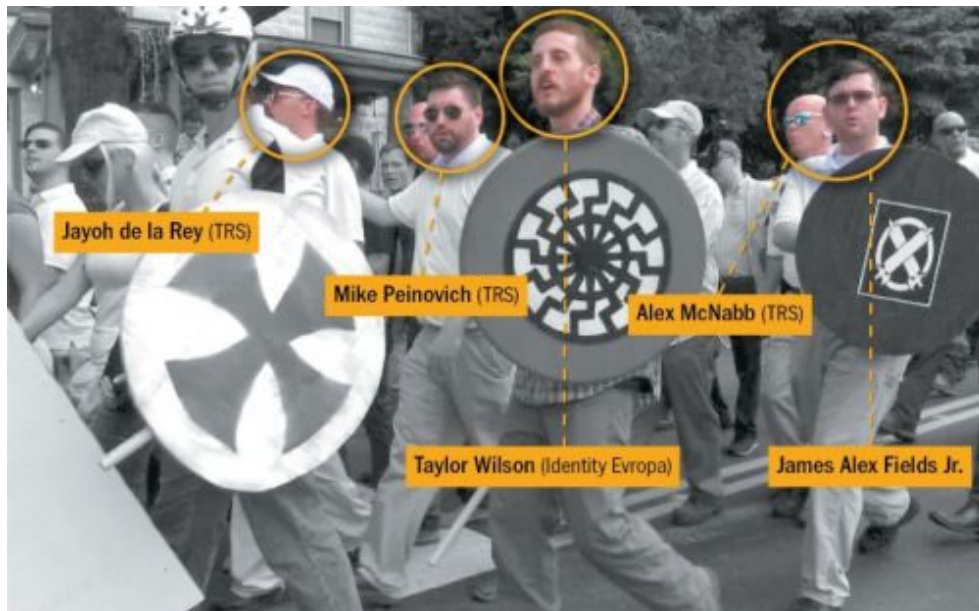
Three TDS hosts, clockwise from upper left: Mike Peinovich, Jesse

“The show came out of edgy libertarianism and the jokey ‘troll’ culture of the internet,” explains Daniel Harper, a researcher who has listened to hundreds of episodes for his own podcast (<http://idontspeakgerman.libsyn.com/>), which debunks far-right propaganda. “These guys aren’t stupid; they have political knowledge. Jesse’s job is to be the jokester and keep the show moving.”

Harper says that, on the show, Dunstan doesn’t appear to be as engaged as Peinovich in the pseudo-intellectual discussions. “When Enoch goes into his sophistry, Sven — or Jesse, he goes by both — will play an audio clip of a slur or racist joke to throw Mike off whatever point he’s making,” Harper says.

Dunstan is particularly admired by listeners for his racist song parodies. The SPLC found in a study of posts in TRS chat rooms (<https://www.splcenter.org/20180419/mcinnis-molyneux-and-4chan-investigating-pathways-alt-right>) that a number of listeners credited Dunstan’s songs with drawing them into the movement. “If you can get them to laugh, you can get them on our side,” explained a user named LeBlanc.

Some mentioned specific songs they admired, such as Dunstan’s version of Bryan Adam’s “Summer of ’69” (renamed “Summer of ’88,” after code for “Heil Hitler”) in which the chorus ends, “These are the first days of our Reich.”



Three of the four co-hosts of *TDS* were photographed at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in 2017, along with James Alex Fields Jr., who in March pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and 28 other charges after he drove his car into a crowd of counterprotestors.

(Photo by Sandi Bachom)

“You get them hooked in with Sven’s songs,” a poster observed, “then when they’re all relaxed, Mike comes in and cracks them over the head with some real shit.”

Because much of the discussion involves code words, the site once published a lexicon to help listeners follow along. Harper says that, if you listen closely, some terrifying ideas emerge from the banter. He points to one conversation that stood out because the hosts rarely talk so explicitly about their beliefs.

The Extremist Next Door: The Highways Current <https://highlandscurrent.org/2019/05/17/the-extremist-next-door/>
The Extremist Next Door: The Highways Current
non-Aryan groups is “un-ironic extermination,” a signal to listeners that he wasn’t kidding.

“That’s rough,” replied Dunstan, adding with a laugh that “extermination the other way is what’s going on now.” When Peinovich argued that “you don’t reduce conflict by increasing the diversity,” Dunstan responded: “Well, you reduce it to nothing once you’ve won, once you’ve increased diversity [*sic*] to 100 percent. I mean, that’s how ethnic conflict goes. One wins, one loses.”

Editor's Note

Hate is not news — it's part of the history of the Highlands, the Northeast, the South, the country, humanity. Long before Jesse Dunstan, another influential white supremacist, Henry Fairfield Osborn, lived in Garrison at a time when the Ku Klux Klan operated openly in Philipstown and Beacon (<https://highlandscurrent.org/2017/08/25/looking-back-local-klan/>) and across the nation. More recently, liers were posted in Beacon (<https://highlandscurrent.org/2018/10/12/hate-hits-the-highlands/>) by members of two white supremacist groups and a swastika and anti-Semitic slur (<https://highlandscurrent.org/2018/11/02/hate-hits-nelsonville/>) were painted inside an empty house in Nelsonville owned by a Jewish resident.

Those incidents and, more importantly, the killings at synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, California, and at two mosques in New Zealand, have left some Highlands residents feeling exposed. In all three attacks, the gunmen took inspiration from racist rhetoric and crackpot logic of the type spewed by Dunstan and other bigots.

“The animating theory of white supremacists is ‘white genocide’ — that white people are in danger of being eliminated from the Earth,” explained Michael Edison Hayden of the Southern Poverty Law Center, who noted that the number of hate groups in the U.S. rose significantly five years ago after the census bureau predicted whites will be a minority by 2044. “When you embrace framing like that, the situation can only decline and only become violent.”

All that seemed reason enough to share the presence of Dunstan and his hate factory while trying to avoid providing what one researcher calls “the oxygen of amplification” for his views. We had extended discussions inside and outside our organization about whether we should “expose” Dunstan — although it's not exactly that, since he's not in hiding and is being watched closely by analysts who track the far right.

One rabbi we interviewed felt strongly that *The Current* should write about Dunstan, reasoning that “the ideas that give birth to violence are powerful,” and that anyone who advocates white supremacy should not be allowed to live in the shadows. “To bring an idea into the public discourse and expect not to be held accountable is sort of naïve,” the rabbi said. “The burden of this hatred should be borne by the people putting the hatred into the world, not by the people who are made vulnerable by it.”

Added Hayden: “People should not be hysterical [with fear] about this, but the community also should not ignore the fact that people who harbor extremist views are in the neighborhood.”

We'd like to hear what you think. How should a community deal with hate? Email me at editor@highlandscurrent.org.

Chip Rowe, *Managing Editor*

From here to there

Everyone grew up somewhere, and for Jesse Dunstan, it was Philipstown. At the Garrison School, his eighth-grade classmates voted him “most artistic.” In the yearbook from his senior year at James O'Neill High School in Highland Falls, he quoted John Lennon (“We all shine on, like the moon and the stars and sun”). He was married at St. Philip's Church in

Dunstan did not respond to interview requests made by email, a letter sent to his home and a phone message left at a number believed to be his. A member of Dunstan's immediate family, contacted by email and phone, declined comment; another close relative did not respond to a Facebook message or email.



Dunstan's Fishkill home appears to be a gathering place for bigots: A photo of racist leader Richard Spencer leaning against the house (above) was shared on a white supremacist chat board with the caption "Sven's house looks cozy," and the Southern Poverty Law Center on May 1 posted a 2017 video clip of a book-burning ritual behind the Dunstan home at which Peinovich and two other white supremacists (not including the host) throw Nazi salutes.

Ken Stern, the director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate (<https://bcsh.bard.edu/>), who has been studying extremism since the 1980s, said he was not surprised to learn that a prominent white supremacist grew up in the Hudson Valley.

"A lot of folks with this ideology are not necessarily someone you'd pick out of a crowd," he says. "What has changed is that extremists feel they have the wind at their back because of the politics of this country and abroad. They hear people in the mainstream saying things that sound familiar in terms of their views of 'us and them' and that 'white folk are endangered and we have to do something about it.' They see it as a noble cause."

In April, FBI Director Christopher Wray told Congress that the agency considers white supremacists to be a "persistent, pervasive threat" to public safety.

Despite his extremism, Dunstan sees himself as a regular guy, waiting for society to catch up. "We're just normal people," he says in a 12-minute rant he posted to YouTube under his real name. "But to the globalists and you-know-who" — presumably, anti-fascists and/or Jews — "we're 'Nazis,' we're full of hate [because] we don't want to be wiped out and demographically replaced by immigrants. Don't let anyone tell you this is a nation of

The Extremist Next Door: The Highlanders' Current was a big mistake. We're still feeling the repercussions of letting those people in who weren't north European." <https://highlandscurrent.org/2019/05/17/the-extremist-next-door/>



Of the nearly 50 hate groups with chapters in New York state identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center, TRS is the only one in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

The alleged killer in Christchurch, New Zealand, who is accused of shooting 50 people dead on March 15 and another victim who died later, cited this same fear of “replacement” — a common trope among white supremacists — in a manifesto he posted before the attacks, as did a 19-year-old charged with attacking a synagogue in Poway, California, on the last day of Passover, killing one and injuring three others, including the rabbi.

Dunstan is not alone in his ignorance. According to the SPLC, there are nearly 50 hate groups with chapters in New York State (<https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?state=NY>), including the American Freedom Party, Identity Evropa (now the American Identify Movement), the National Socialist Liberation Front, Patriot Front, and the Racial Nationalist Party of America, as well as The Right Stuff, which Dunstan operates out of a post office box in Hopewell Junction. (In 2017, Dunstan registered an LLC of the same name with New York State.)

Trying to Explain

“Humans need to belong to something. For so much of us, our identity helps us belong. I have my roots in New York, my Irish ethnicity, my Catholicism, my alma mater, my membership in the world of journalism, and conservatism, plus the very local, human connections. Among alienated white men, many of whom lack religion and come from places without strong senses of community, they seek to belong to something, but nothing is there. But they know they’re white and they know they’re American. So white nationalism follows.” ~Timothy Carney, author of *Alienated America*, in *The Christian Post* (<https://www.christianpost.com/books/trump-support-points-to-collapse-of-churches-civic-institutions-author-tim-carney-says.html>)

The Extremist Next Door: The Highlands Current

In the hours after the killing in Christchurch, while Christian and Jewish leaders sat for zakat, or afternoon prayers, in a show of support at a Beacon mosque, Dunstan also responded to the killings. He reposted on Twitter a photo of a woman holding a sign that read, “No more white terrorism,” and commented, “There are ways to achieve such a lofty goal, but you’re not interested.”

Social media

When people in the Highlands were asked how they would respond if a white supremacist with a popular podcast lived in their neighborhood, a typical reaction was, “White supremacists have podcasts?” TRS claims 100,000 listeners a week and posts episodes of *TDS* on YouTube and at least one audio archive that states in its terms and conditions that it does not allow hate speech. The podcast format and private chat rooms were embraced by extremists after the violence at the Unite the Right march in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 prompted companies such as Facebook and Twitter to close their accounts.

White supremacists continue to play cat-and-mouse with the social-media giants. Dunstan posted more than 3,300 tweets at SeventhSonTRS (which included his real name in the bio, noted he lived in Fishkill and included a link for donations) before it was closed; his most recent Twitter account, which also had his real name in the bio, had 2,000 followers before it was suspended in April. He also has at least two Facebook accounts, including one with 1,500 friends who include Peinovich and many others who appear from their monikers and bio photos to be white supremacists. A gallery photo shows an oven mitt that the show sent in 2016 to donors with its name and the words “Pop ’em in!,” a reference to the Nazi gas chambers.

Hatred of 'Other' Not a New Idea*A century ago, promoting 'scientific' racism*

As it happens, Garrison — population 4,400 — was home to a prominent white supremacist besides Jesse Dunstan.

The men grew up about a mile from each other and attended the same church, but Dunstan never met Henry Fairfield Osborn. They lived a century apart, but the racist ideas they spread are similar.

As a boy, Osborn spent summers in Garrison; as an adult he lived in the landmark home at Castle Rock; he is buried in the St. Philip's churchyard. A celebrated paleontologist and conservationist, Osborn was president of the American Museum of Natural History for 25 years and championed the teaching of science and evolution in public schools.

"He was as well-known in his time as Albert Einstein," says Brian Regal, a history professor and author of *Henry Fairfield Osborn: Race and the Search for the Origins of Man*. "He wanted to do good in science and politics and religion. Yet, at the same time, his ideals were stained by a much darker strain of thinking."



Henry Fairfield
Osborn

In 1916, Osborn wrote the introduction for *The Passing of the Great Race*, a book by a museum trustee and friend, Madison Grant, that Adolf Hitler praised as "my Bible." Toward the end of his life, Regal says, Osborn distanced himself from Grant, who he felt had become too extreme. But a year before his death,

Osborn was deeply impressed after a visit to Germany by the Nazis' "racial hygiene" campaign. "He viewed the Nazis in the same way that some socialists in America viewed Stalin, through rose-colored glasses," Regal says.

Although Osborn would accuse his colleague Grant of not basing his arguments about race on the firm foundation of science, some of Osborn's arguments were equally ridiculous. He claimed, for example, that there were three "species" of humans — the superior Nordics (*Homo sapiens europaeus*), the Mongolians and the Negroids. The latter were in "a state of arrested brain development," he declared, because food is easier to find at the equator.

More ominously, a century before Dunstan and the shooters in Pittsburgh, Christchurch and Poway claimed the superior white race faces "replacement," Osborn endorsed the same fallacy.

"The original pioneer stock is dying out; the foreign element is in the ascendancy," he wrote. "Purity of race is today found in but one nation — the Scandinavian; but Scandinavia has been seriously bled by emigration." He expressed little faith in "the melting pot" and said protecting white people needed to be "a matter taken into consideration by the State."

Hitler loved it, but many Americans, not so much. When Osborn died in 1935, a reader wrote *The New York Times* to protest a plan by the American Museum of Natural History to erect a memorial. "If a monument

The Extremist Next Door: The Highlands Current is needed to supplement the moral achievements of the professor, it should be erected at Nuremberg, where his racism is carried out under the emblem of the swastika,” he wrote.

Those donors and the \$10 a month that Dunstan and Peinovich charge visitors to access TRS podcasts likely support them and other employees, says Harper. After the four original co-hosts of the flagship show were doxxed, Dunstan — momentarily the lone voice at the console — assured listeners the site would survive. “There’s nothing else for us to do but TRS,” he said. (Days after he was identified, Dunstan said on the show that he had purchased a shotgun.)

Peinovich soon returned to TRS, embracing his notoriety, although his parents asked him to change his name, according to an account in *The New Yorker* (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/16/birth-of-a-white-supremacist>).

He and Dunstan have since been joined by two new co-hosts. The first is Alex McNabb, who has always used his real name and last month lost his job as an emergency medical technician in rural Virginia after he said on the show that he “terrorized” a black child by using a large-gauge needle to draw his blood. (In a videotaped hearing before a county board, McNabb claimed *TDS* is simply “edgy shock comedy” akin to Howard Stern and that he had been joking.) The second, Jayoh de le Rey, has not been identified.

The optics

In a report issued earlier this year (<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist>), the Southern Poverty Law Center noted that after their exposure at Charlottesville, white supremacists argued over strategy. Instead of rallies that brought bad publicity and led to participants being identified and losing their jobs, “movement figureheads largely settled in favor of putting forward as inoffensive a public presentation as possible,” the group reported.

That suited Dunstan. In March 2018 he removed a podcast called *Action!* from the TRS platform, saying it didn’t fit with the site’s mission. The show was produced by a member of the Traditionalist Worker Party, which promotes violent street protests. According to the SPLC, during the online bickering over the removal, Dunstan explained that his quibbles weren’t with “optics” such as the “uniforms, helmets, polo shirts, torches, banner drops or monuments,” but with the efficacy of open conflict.

The image below, posted by Jesse Dunstan on one of his Facebook accounts, requires explanation, which is provided with assistance from the [Anti-Defamation League](https://www.adl.org/) (<https://www.adl.org/>).

It is taken from a Playstation 4 game called FarCry5 that includes a right-wing cult, but was altered by Dunstan, who superimposed faces over most of the game characters in the original image.



From left, is Mike Peinovich (1); Sam Hyde (2), a comedian whose name has become a “meme,” or repetitious punchline, in the white supremacist world; Dunstan (3); Richard Spencer (4); Andrew Anglin (5), founder the neo-Nazi site *The Daily Stormer*; Nathan Damigo (6), founder of the white supremacist group Identity Evropa; and a female character from the game.

In the game image, the person kneeling (7) has “sinner” scrawled on his back; Dunstan changed that to “normie,” a reference to people who are not white supremacists.

“In the bigger picture, fighting with antifa [anti-fascists] is an energy siphon GloboHomo set up to entrap us and waste our time,” Dunstan wrote, according to the SPLC. (GloboHomo is shorthand for a globalized/homogenized culture that tolerates diversity and racial equality.) Dunstan argued that energy would be better spent growing platforms like TRS.

“I want to replace the Jewry that runs news and entertainment media,” he wrote.

Unfortunately, not every bigot believes in the power of podcasts. In October, hours before 11 people were shot dead at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, the alleged killer, Robert Bowers, posted a message on a site called Gab. “Screw your optics,” he said, addressing other extremists. “I’m going in.”

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